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Remedies are suggested for difficulties encountered in Latin to English translations by pupils in the fourth and fifth forms of English Grammar schools. Reading skills proficiency is seen as a prerequisite for effective translation, and stave analysis is suggested as a method of solving the problem of gross error in pupils' translations of complex Latin sentences. The importance of comprehending structure (as opposed to word translation) for full understanding of a language is stressed, and linguistic markers as signals of structure are considered as the guiding principles of the method. A short bibliography is included. (JH)

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THE APPLICATION OF LINGUISTICS TO THE PROBLEM OF TEACHING PUPILS TO TRANSLATE COMPLEX LATIN SENTENCES INTO ENGLISH

by
Harry Schofield

L'auteur du présent article a constaté que, pour l'élève anglais, ce sont les périodes latines complexes qui impliquent la difficulté principale dans la traduction en anglais de textes latins. Afin d'éliminer cette source d'erreur l'auteur propose une analyse selon une échelle qui, pour des raisons de commodité, est l'échelle musicale à cinq. Chaque élément de phrase qui a un rapport direct avec un autre élément est écrit en dessous de celui-là. L'ordre des mots de la phrase latine est conservé. L'élément principal de la période se trouve ainsi toujours en haut sur l'échelle. Cette analyse a été développée en conformité avec l'analyse en chaine (*string analysis*) de Z. S. Harris.

L'analyse en échelle offre au début à l'étudiant une aide visuelle qui lui permet de saisir le sens des phrases latines malgré leur complexité en montrant de façon exacte et claire les rapports qu'il y a entre les différents éléments de la période. L'élève développe ainsi une technique pour comprendre les périodes latines qui, peu à peu, s'automatise. L'analyse à l'aide de l'échelle peut être abandonnée plus tard. Elle n'est pas seulement une aide utile pour la traduction mais facilite aussi l'apprentissage d'une plus grande facilité de lecture chez l'élève.

Der Verfasser dieses Artikels hat herausgefunden, daß komplexe lateinische Sätze für den englischen Schüler die Hauptfehlerquelle bei der Übersetzung lateinischer Texte ins Englische darstellen. Als Mittel zur Beseitigung dieser Fehlerquelle soll die Stufenanalyse dienen, bei der aus Zweckmäßigkeitsgründen das musikalische Fünf-Stufen-System verwendet wird. Dabei wird jede Satzkomponente, die in direkter Abhängigkeit zu einer anderen Komponente steht, eine Zeile unter diese geschrieben. Die ursprüngliche Aufeinanderfolge der Wörter im lateinischen Satz wird bewahrt. Die Hauptkomponente des Satzes steht somit immer in der obersten Zeile des fünfzeiligen Stufensystems. Diese Analyse ist in Anlehnung an die Kettenanalyse (*string analysis*) von Z. S. Harris entwickelt worden.

Die Stufenanalyse stellt für den Schüler im Anfangsstadium eine visuelle Hilfe zum Erfassen des Sinnzusammenhanges komplexer lateinischer Sätze dar, indem sie die Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse zwischen den einzelnen Satzkomponenten genau und klar aufzeigt. Dabei entwickelt der Schüler eine Technik zum Verstehen lateinischer Sätze, die mit der Zeit automatisiert wird. In diesem Stadium kann die Stufenanalyse dann wegfallen. Sie ist nicht nur eine nützliche Übersetzungshilfe, sondern vermag auch die Lesefähigkeit des Schülers entscheidend zu fördern.

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Dissatisfacton with existing methods of teaching translation from Latin into English led the author (Schofield 1963) to investigate the precise sources of difficulty, especially in the translation of complex

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Latin sentences. Teachers who use the traditional grammar/translation method seem much more definite about methods of teaching Latin grammar than they are about methods of teaching translation. The latter are sometimes little more than *ad hoc* arrangements, and differ not only from teacher to teacher, but also with the same teacher teaching different classes. None of the methods investigated showed any attempt to incorporate the findings of modern linguistics in an improved method of teaching translation.

By contrast, exponents of the direct method in Latin claim that, by minimising formal translation, they leave their pupils in the middle years of the grammar school with more time to 'read' Latin authors. There is, however, a disturbing lack of precision in their definition of the term 'read', together with an emphasis on oral synthesis rather than on linguistic analysis in their teaching of grammar.

Lado (1964) makes two important points about the direct method of teaching. The first is that the mind of a pupil learning a second language is not the *tabula rasa* that it was when he acquired the mother tongue, so that a second language is always acquired to some extent through the linguistic habits formed in learning the first. The second point is that teachers who used the direct method of teaching modern languages in America in the 1930s fell short of their aim of teaching 'efficient reading' since 'reading' did not operate through full control of the language, and produced in their pupils little more than some slight 'reading competence', i.e. the ability to read graded exercises with dictionary help. Exponents of the direct method of teaching Latin frequently fail to appreciate the significance of the first point made by Lado, and much of their teaching leaves them open to criticism on the second point.

Gates (1949) warns that reading is not a narrow scholastic tool but a complex skill dependent on higher mental processes. It is doubtful whether the definition of 'reading' by English teachers of Latin by the direct method would be acceptable to Gates or to Lado.

The investigation mentioned above concerned pupils in the fourth and fifth forms of English Grammar Schools, i.e. pupils in the age range 14 to 16 years who were in their last two years of the Latin course leading to the Ordinary Level of the General Certificate of Education. It was hypothesised that vocabulary, grammatical constructions, and Latin word order would constitute the main sources of translation difficulty. Translation passages of appropriate difficulty

were given to experimental and control groups matched for ability and attainment in Latin.

Statistical analysis showed that, whether the hypothesised difficulty factors were eliminated singly or in combination, the mean score of the experimental group was in no instance significantly higher than that of the control group. This showed that the main difficulty of translating complex Latin sentences into English was not occasioned by the hypothesised factors. Even when the pupils were able to name grammatical constructions, and were given vocabulary and a simplified word order (i. e. rearrangement of the Latin words in the order they would have appeared in English), there were still areas of error, some of which were of a serious nature. Moreover, both experimental and control groups broke down at the same point in the Latin passage. Tests with second and third form pupils confirmed that below a certain level of complexity the Latin word order was not responsible for serious breakdown of translation sense, nor did grammatical constructions provided they were presented in simple, linear order e. g. :—

praemisit milites qui hostes aggrederetur. "He sent forward soldiers to attack the enemy."

The complete breakdown of translation (designated 'gross error') was the essential problem that a more effective teaching method would have to handle. In 'gross error', it sometimes happened that there was no correspondence whatever between the elements of the Latin original and of the English sentence(s) offered as a translation. Nor did the translation always make sense as an English expression, but frequently constituted an '*ad sensum*' completion of an erroneous idea or 'condensation' of some erroneous idea as in the translation of: —

non illo melior quisquam nec amantior aequi

No man was more morally upright than he or a greater lover of justice

as: —

"It is better to kill nobody."

The most frequent cause of 'gross error' was the violation of the integrity of syntactical units and the assimilation of part of the content of a violated unit to another one. This point was well illustrated in the sentence: —

captivi ut sibi parceretur oraverunt

"The prisoners begged that they might be spared." The sentence consists of a main unit, *captivi oraverunt*, within which nests a syntactically dependent unit *UT sibi parcERETUR*. The capitals show the

opening and closing markers of dependence which show both the limits and the chief syntactical characteristics of the dependent clause together with its precise relationship to the main unit.

No word may be taken outside the parameters provided by the dependency markers and placed in another unit. Yet the following examples of mistranslation indicate that this was precisely what some pupils did: –

"The captives were spared and in order to ask."

"They begged the captives to be spared."

"The prisoners spared and begged them."

'Stave analysis' was developed in an attempt to solve the problem of 'gross error' in pupils' translations of complex Latin sentences. The guiding principles of the method are the importance of structure for full understanding of a language and the importance of linguistic markers as signals of structure. Dependency markers set the parameters for evaluating the words which in their interrelationship constitute the dependent units.

As a visual aid in the early stages of learning by stave analysis, the pupil is presented with complex Latin sentences analysed on a five-line musical stave across the width of a sheet of paper. The first thing that this visual presentation indicates is that words are not uttered in complex sentences in the way that conventional print indicates, i.e. in linear progression. In addition the stave presentation, because it marks all component units clearly and shows their precise sentence function in relation to all other units, reduces the amount of backward and forward eye-movement, which Fries (1962) citing Farnham, says is symptomatic of poor reading performance in the mother tongue. In Latin, excessive eye-movement suggests that the translator is concerned with individual words rather than with structures. As the translator moves his eye backwards and forwards, he repeatedly crosses dependency markers which delineate syntactical units. This in turn leads to violation and assimilation as illustrated above.

The basic idea of stave analysis was string analysis (Harris 1962) and the defining of units composing complex sentences as adjuncts to the right (or) left of other words or strings of words. Thus in: –

the door which was open,

"which was open" is an adjunct to the right of "door". Complex Latin sentences can be reduced to strings of words which lie to the right or left of other strings or individual words in conventional speech and print. The different vertical placings of the stave emphasise

not only the limits of the strings, but the words or strings of words on which they depend, and their precise interrelationships within the total sentence. Moreover, the analysis is performed with no alteration to the original word order of the Latin sentence.

Although a five line stave has been mentioned, staves of greater numbers of lines may be employed. The latter will provide the pupil with a more detailed and sophisticated linguistic analysis, but may, in the early stages at least, give a less clear idea of the totality and integrity of sentence components. A comparison of the following analyses of the same Latin statement illustrates the point: –

Rati castra in alteram partem translata esse.

	rati		
		castrA in alteram partem translatA ESSE.	

	rati							
		castrA					translatA ESSE.	
			in			partem		
				alteram				

It will be seen that for additional clarity the dependency markers are printed in capitals.

In stave analysis, any block or component directly dependent on another block or component is placed one space lower on the stave and immediately after the last word of the block (or the individual word as in the case of the above example) on which it depends. The main block or component (Harris's main or centre string) always appears in the top stave space. Not infrequently in a complex Latin sentence, dependent units nest within this main unit, or even within other dependent units. In such cases, the dependency still appears one space lower on the stave immediately below the gap left by its own removal. Again it will be seen that precise dependence can be shown without alteration of the Latin word order as in the illustration below: –

	Caesar		ad oppidum		pervenit.	
		illo tempore		celeriter		

The vertical lines on the stave, used in conjunction with the horizontal lines are a schematic reminder of the integrity of units. They reinforce the words or parts of words (dependency markers) printed in capitals in the examples quoted where a dependent clause is contained in the sentence. The combination of linguistic and schematic limits show the learner that no word or words may be taken from within the parameters of one unit and assimilated to the words of another unit, as is done in 'gross error'. Each unit is precisely delineated and inviolable.

Any unit in its entirety may be removed from the sentence without damage to any other unit within the sentence. Thus if all the dependent units were removed, we would be left with the main unit in the top stave space, and would have the main information which the sentence was intended to convey. The removal of any unit reduces by one increment the total information content of the sentence, but does nothing to alter the basic information of the main unit. The Latin utterance is a synthesis, which can be best understood after precise analysis. It is this precise analysis which stave analysis provides.

Stave analysis shows the learner and teaches him to apply (in the first instance consciously), those processes which the mind of the skilled reader performs unconsciously and automatically because it responds instantly to the signals of structure. A marker is seen and the information which it conveys is instantly noted. Frequently, when units of dependency nest within the main unit, or within larger dependent units, the mind has to suspend judgement until the entire sentence has been assessed. This process is common in English poetry as in: –

> Half a league, half a league,
> Half a league onward
> Into the valley of Death
> Rode the Six Hundred.

The mind cannot begin to derive sense from the early words until it has read the whole verse and perceived the relationship between the early and the later words. The function of each word must first be seen in relation to every other word. It is precisely this process which the mind of the learner of Latin fails to carry out, because the learner has never been taught a scientific approach to translation. Because he is taught to translate in terms of WORDS he ignores STRUCTURES, and because he ignores structures he violates units and assimilates part of their content to other units. Frequently he makes such elemen-

tary errors as assuming that because Latin words are juxtaposed in the linear progression of the sentence on the printed page, that they are directly related syntactically.

The introduction of stave analysis as a method of teaching translation from Latin into English is not a confession that the main purpose of teaching Latin is to teach translation rather than reading. Rather it is the reiteration of a point made by Fries (1962) that reading is a process which must be consciously learned, and that all consideration of the uses to which the skill of reading may be put, must be postponed until such time as the skill itself has been acquired. Fries likens the relationship between the acquiring of the reading skill and its application in reading to the twin processes of learning to stand and learning to walk in infancy. The first is a prerequisite of the second. So it is with translation and reading in Latin. It is precisely because current methods of teaching translation do not teach the 'reading process' and the reading skill, that translation is regarded as an artificial exercise. *Ad hoc*, unscientific methods of teaching reading are not employed with the mother tongue, why then should they be used in the teaching of translation from Latin to English?

If, in learning to translate, the pupil repeatedly, and deliberately applies the mental processes of the reader, he is building on a sure foundation. After sufficient experience he will learn to respond automatically and unconsciously to markers as signals of structure, as he does when reading the mother tongue. At such a time he will cease to translate Latin and will begin to read Latin. Furthermore, his reading will be 'efficient reading' since it will operate through full control of the Latin language based on a thorough understanding of its structure.

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